

Peruvian Airmail, 1927 – 1941

This is a study of Peruvian commercial airmail from its beginning to the opening of World War II. It is a study of rates and routes, not a record of experimental aviation or first flights.

Airmail was vitally important to Peru because of its geography. Communication among the three regions – desert coast, sierra (mountains), and jungle -- was extremely difficult. There were railway short lines between coastal cities. And, some coastal cities were linked by rail to their highland counterparts but the railroads were not interconnected. Only difficult mountain roads linked the jungle to the rest of the nation. Air service finally tied the nation together.

Scheduled *domestic* air service began in December 1927, linking the jungle port of Iquitos with Lima via Contamana and Masisa. Lima was connected by mule track and rail to the jungle air route. Coastal air service began in September 1928.

International airmail began in 1929 with the opening of FAM 9 to the Canal Zone. Soon the route was extended to Chile and Argentina. South Atlantic airmail service via French and German airlines came later. The exhibit is arranged according to routes and rates.



Routes. For many years there were two separate air routes in Peru: 1) the jungle route linking Iquitos with San Ramon; and 2) the coastal route from Talara to Arica with Lima in the center. The air connection between jungle and coastal routes was not established until 1937. Few mountain cities had airmail service.

The first domestic airmail was the jungle route with an air connection between Iquitos and San Ramon at the head of the sierra road system, then by mule track and road to Huancayo where mail was put aboard the train to Lima. Iquitos was the only important stop. Others were for refueling.

International airmail was generally via Panagra on FAM 9 which followed the west coast of South America, then crossed to Buenos Aires from Santiago de Chile. Alternatively, Faucett might fly the mail to Chile where it was picked up by CGA (French) or DLH (German) air lines.

Rates. Airmail postage is composed of ordinary postage plus an air supplement. Domestic postage and postage to members of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain (UPAE) was the same – 10¢ per 20g. Postage to members of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) was 15¢ per 20g. *Rates and routes given in this exhibit were obtained by the exhibitor directly from the Boletin Postal, Telegrafico, y Radiotelegrafico of Peru.*

The air supplement varied according to distance. Initially the supplement was paid in units of 20g, then 10g, and finally 5g. With the final weight reduction exceedingly light and fragile envelopes became popular.

Outline of Exhibit

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| • Domestic Airmail | • Europe via North Atlantic Route |
| • Northern South America and Central America | • Southern South America |
| • North America | • Europe via South Atlantic Route |

Double Line border identifies notable pieces